

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



ALL BEETHOVEN PROGRAM

JOHN KRUSPE

PIANIST

WALTER HALL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1980

8 P.M.

PROGRAM

Sonata in F Major, Op. 10, no. 2

Allegro
Allegretto
Presto

A review which appeared in the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung in 1799, a year after the composition of op. 10, speaks of Beethoven's "extraordinary thoroughness in the higher style of writing and his unusual command of the instrument for which he writes, he being unquestionably one of the best pianoforte composers and players of our time." The Sonata op. 10, no. 2 has some unusual features which seem to justify this critical acclaim. The development is based on a motive from the codetta, and the recapitulation begins in the alien key of D major. The Allegretto is part way between the stately style of a minuet and the more vigorous style of a scherzo. The Finale is little more than an extended binary form, is high-spirited and humorous, but at the same time contrapuntal in an informal way.

Sonata in C# Minor, Op. 27, no. 2, "quasi una fantasia"

Adagio sostenuto
Allegretto
Presto agitato

Czerny quotes Beethoven as having described the first movement of this sonata "as like a night scene, where a plaintive voice sounds from a great distance." The "Moonlight" title, however, was applied by the critic Rellstab. As a new departure in sonata form, the work is one of extreme interest, and along with its companion, op. 27 no. 1 (both composed in 1802) give us a taste of Beethoven's legendary improvisatory skill.

The opening movement has a completely unified mood. There is no second subject, and in the middle section the melody ceases, leaving the triplets to pursue an independent course. Points of tension are created by changes in harmonic rhythm and by chromatic colouring. The movement passes without a break into the Allegretto and trio, which Liszt described as "une fleur entre deux abîmes."

The finale has a breathless forward impetus. The first subject is pure passagework, the second is passionate melody. The coda includes a quasi-recitative common in classical fantasias.

Sonata in Ab Major, Op. 110

Moderato cantabile molto espressivo
Allegro molto - Adagio ma non troppo -
Fuga: Allegro ma non troppo

In his last three works for piano, op. 109, 110 and 111 (composed between 1820-23) Beethoven moved to a new conception of the unity of a work in several movements, a conception that informs the last quartets as well. In the first movement of this work, Beethoven uses the compositional technique of continuous development. The midsection is only sixteen bars long, and contains four variations of the first theme. The recapitulation combines material hitherto presented separately, in another development of the opening idea. This movement contrasts with the Scherzo and Trio. The Adagio introduction to the third movement juxtaposes several contrasting elements to create suspense. The carefully engineered, vocally inspired arioso dolente creates a feeling of great repose, which is contrasted by the Allegro fuga. The repeat of the fuga has its subject inverted.

INTERMISSION

Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57

Allegro assai
Andante con moto - Allegro ma non troppo

This sonata was composed in 1804. Czerny wrote in 1838, "In a new edition by the Hamburg publisher Cranz of the Sonata in F minor, op. 57, which Beethoven himself considered his greatest, the title Appassionata, for which it is too great, was added to it. This title would be more fitly applied to the Eb Sonata, op. 7, which he composed in an impassioned mood."

The first movement is full of conflict and tension. Beethoven uses contrasts of register, dynamics, textures and rhythms to create and sustain this tension. The second movement, described by Tovey as "a vision of a world away from action" is a theme with variations.

The unrelenting third movement is almost entirely devoid of contrasts. The second half of the movement is repeated, but not the first, making the Presto coda, with its new thematic material all the more surprising.

Sonata in A Major, Op. 101

Etwas lebhaft und mit der
innigsten Empfindung
Lebhaft. Marschmässig
Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll - Geschwinde,
doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit

This sonata, composed in 1816, is the first of the five late piano sonatas, and initiates a new period of productivity after five years of relative inactivity. The sonata as a whole combines intimate lyricism and humour and is one of Beethoven's subtlest works. Charles Rosen compares the rhythmical flow and air of lyrical meditation in the first movement to Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words.

The indistinct thematic material, combined with a lack of tonic definition blurs the formal lines of the highly compressed first movement sonata form. The second movement is a March and Trio. The March has a relentless and unvaried dotted rhythm; and the trio is a series of short canons. A coda leads back to a repeat of the March.

The Adagio is an introduction to the final movement and contains many fantasie elements. The finale exploits contrast and surprise for a humorous effect. The development is a lengthy fugue which contains a four part stretto just before the recapitulation.

Notes by Vicki Postl

Next Faculty of Music Event: Hindemith Festival Series #2
October 30, 1980, Walter Hall, 8 p.m.